

Student Name:  
Ms. Haywood/Whitfield  
English 8  
November 2015

## Grammar Test Review for Subject-Verb Agreement

What is a Subject?

- Your subject is the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_ that your sentence is about.
- Important reminders:
  - Your sentence may have a compound subject.
  - Your subject may be an \_\_\_\_\_ pronoun.
  - Your subject will never be in a prepositional phrase.
  - *Usually* your subject comes before the verb

What is a Verb?

The main verb tells what the subject does or links the subject to another word that describes it.

- Action Verb: shows action subject performs

I walk three miles every day.

- Linking Verb: connects subject to another word or words that describe it  
I am tired.

- Helping Verb: joins an action verb to form the complete verb

I was walking three miles every day when the weather was warmer.

Subject-verb agreement means your subject and verb must \_\_\_\_\_, or agree, in number.

1. If you have a singular subject, then you must use a \_\_\_\_\_ verb.
  1. The dog barks at every sound he hears.
2. If you have a plural subject, then you must use a \_\_\_\_\_ verb.
  1. The dogs bark at every sound they hear.

It is important to know how your singular and plural subjects and verbs are formed!

**For your subject**, which is a noun, in most cases, a singular NOUN does not end in an –s

The dog barks at every sound it hears.

Write a sentence that uses a SINGULAR NOUN:

---

**For your subject**, which is a noun, the plural NOUN typically ends in an –s

The dogs bark at every sound they hear

Write a sentence that uses a PLURAL NOUN:

---

**For your verb**

The singular form ends in an –s

The dog barks at every sound it hears.

The plural form does **not** end in an –s

The dogs bark at every sound they hear.

Student Name:  
Ms. Haywood/Whitfield  
English 8  
November 2015

## Subject-Verb Agreement Problem Spots

The Verb is a form of be, have, or do.

The verb is a form of be, have, or do. Make sure a linking verb agrees with its subject, not with the word or phrase that describes the subject.

Incorrect: The worst backyard pest are *squirrels*. What is the subject? \_\_\_\_\_

Correct: The worst backyard pest is *squirrels*.

Incorrect: The girls hasn't lost a tournament in soccer this season. What is the subject?

\_\_\_\_\_

Correct: The girls haven't lost a tournament in soccer this season.

Incorrect: The boys doesn't know how to play Jeopardy. What is the subject?

\_\_\_\_\_

Correct: The boys don't know how to play Jeopardy.

**Words or phrases come between the subject & the verb.**

- Prepositional Phrases
  - Incorrect: The number of *students* have remained consistent. What is the subject? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Correct: The *number* of students has remained consistent.
- Relative Clauses
  - Incorrect: The dog who likes to chase my *cats* have run away. What is the subject? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Correct: The *dog* who likes to chase my cats has run away.

**The subject is an indefinite pronoun.**

- What is an indefinite pronoun?
  - A pronoun that does not replace a specific person, place, or thing; it is general (i.e. someone, anyone, everyone, each, every, some, all).
- Most indefinite pronouns are either always singular or always plural.

Fill in the chart below with INDEFINITE PRONOUNS that match the headings:

Always Singular	Always Plural	Singular or Plural

Student Name:  
Ms. Haywood/Whitfield  
English 8  
November 2015

--	--	--

- Beware: indefinite pronouns are often followed by a prepositional phrase or dependent clause.
- Correct: *Each* of my classes is difficult in some way.
- Correct: Neither of the movies is interesting.
- Correct: Few students answer the question using a complete sentence.

**There is a compound subject joined by AND or a subject joined by OR or NOR**

- If joined by and, then subjects are combined and become plural, so verb must also be plural except if the sentence refers to one person or thing.
  - Incorrect: *Jack and Jill* walks up the hill.
  - Correct: *Jack and Jill* walk up the hill.
  - Incorrect: One brilliant writer and researcher were George Washington Carver.
  - Correct: One brilliant writer and researcher was George Washington Carver.
- If ONLY singular subjects are joined by or /nor, then the verb is \_\_\_\_\_ and if ONLY plural subjects are joined by or /nor, then the verb is \_\_\_\_\_. Don't combine the subjects.
  - Incorrect: *Jack or Jill* walk up the hill.
  - Correct: *Jack or Jill* walks up the hill.
  - Incorrect: Cats *nor* dogs eats with a fork and knife.
  - Correct: Cats *nor* dogs eat with a fork and knife.
- If there is a MIX of subjects (singular and plural) joined by either or /neither nor, then the subjects are *not* combined, so the verb must agree with whichever subject is **closest** to it.
  - Incorrect: Either the microphone or the *speakers* is broken.
  - Correct: Either the microphone or the *speakers* are broken.
  - Incorrect: Neither the teacher nor the *students* wants to stay late.
  - Correct: Neither the teacher nor the *students* want to stay late.

**The verb comes before the subject.**

- Sentences that ask a question.
  - Is the book in the library?
  - Turn the sentence into a statement.
  - The *book* is in the library.
- Sentences that begin with Here or There.
  - Here is your textbook.
  - There are three more exams scheduled for this class.

**Turn the sentence around.**

- Your *textbook* is here.

Student Name:

Ms. Haywood/Whitfield

English 8

November 2015

- Three more *exams* are scheduled for this class.

**The subject is a collective noun.**

- What is a collective noun?
- A collective noun names a group (i.e. family, team, committee).
- Most collective nouns refer to a group acting as one unit; therefore, they are treated as singular and must have a singular verb.
- The *family* rides bikes together each day.
- If the collective noun refers to the individual parts or members of a group, it takes a plural verb.
- Incorrect: The team has been discussing their strategies with one another in separate conversations.
- Correct: The team have been discussing their strategies with one another in separate conversations.

**The subject is an expression of an amount.**

- What is an expression of an amount?
- A measurement, a percentage, or a
- It may be singular or plural depending on how it is used.
- Incorrect: Five dollars were my birthday gift.
- Correct: Five dollars is my birthday gift.
- Incorrect: Three dollars was blowing in the wind.
- Correct: Three dollars were blowing in the wind.

**The subject is a creative title that is plural (a book, song, movie) or the name of a country, city or organization that generally takes a singular verb**

- Incorrect: The Bahamas are a popular destination.
- Correct: The Bahamas is a popular destination.
- Incorrect: The United Nations are located in New York City.
- Correct: The United Nations is located in New York City.

Student Name:  
Ms. Haywood/Whitfield  
English 8  
November 2015

## Practice for the Test

### Choose the correct form of the verb that agrees with the subject.

1. Annie and her brothers (is, are) at school.
2. Either my mother or my father (is, are) coming to the meeting.
3. The dog or the cats (is, are) outside.
4. Either my shoes or your coat (is, are) always on the floor.
5. George and Tamara (doesn't, don't) want to see that movie.
6. Benito (doesn't, don't) know the answer.
7. One of my sisters (is, are) going on a trip to France.
8. The man with all the birds (live, lives) on my street.
9. The movie, including all the previews, (take, takes) about two hours to watch.
10. The players, as well as the captain, (want, wants) to win.
11. Either answer (is, are) acceptable.
12. Every one of those books (is, are) fiction.
13. Nobody (know, knows) the trouble I've seen.
14. (Is, Are) the news on at five or six?
15. Mathematics (is, are) John's favorite subject, while Civics (is, are) Andrea's favorite subject.
16. Eight dollars (is, are) the price of a movie these days.
17. (Is, Are) the tweezers in this drawer?
18. Your pants (is, are) at the cleaner's.
19. There (was, were) fifteen candies in that bag. Now there (is, are) only one left!
20. The committee (debates, debate) these questions carefully.
21. The committee (leads, lead) very different lives in private.
22. The Prime Minister, together with his wife, (greet, greets) the press cordially.
23. All of the CDs, even the scratched one, (is, are) in this case.
24. There (is, are) twenty students in the room.
25. Neither my brothers nor my father (has, have) attended college.
26. The tapes in the glove compartment (belong, belongs) to Jerry.
27. Each of my sons (wear, wears) a baseball cap.
28. The fans at the back of the theatre and that woman in front (was, were) making too much noise.
29. Maury and his brother (go, goes) to the bowling alley every day.
30. Everyone on the bus (was, were) annoyed by the little boy running up and down the aisle.
31. Either my hard drive or one of my programs (is, are) not working right.
32. He is one of those people who (work, works) too hard.
33. That man and his friends (meet, meets) for coffee in the snack room.
34. When (are, is) the bottles going to be returned for recycling?
35. The school of whales (swim, swims) in the deep blue sea.
36. "All the Single Ladies" (is, are) a hit song by Beyonce.
36. One third of the homework (was, were) due last week.

Student Name:

Ms. Haywood/Whitfield

English 8

November 2015